

Social Media Policy

Social media proves to be useful for engaging with young people in youth and community work practice. Online engagement is often accompanied by fear around boundaries. However, fundamentally, the fears/risks surrounding social media use are similar to those encountered in everyday youth and community work, and can be overcome by applying the same ethical principles.

What are the risks?

Risk of Youth Worker 'hearing' things about young people, mainly through news feed

Risk of young person feeling like youth worker is violating their privacy

Risk of youth worker being 'on shift' with young people outside of work hours

Risk of informality confusing young people about boundaries

Risk of young people sharing personal information to staff members

Risk of witnessing safeguarding incidents

Risk of safeguarding disclosures

Risk of misinterpretation of language, including symbols and abbreviations by young people and parents/carers

How do we manage these risks?

In practice, a thorough risk assessment will be carried out for your work with young people. The same applies online. By following simple steps you will be managing these online risks. Before joining any new social media sites, the senior management team will assess the risk and modify this social media policy in accordance.

Staff behaviour guidelines

When using social media, staff should maintain professional communication. Language should be managed in the same way that it would be when working directly with young people and staff's role is always to be a positive role model.

Staff should set up a professional Facebook profile separate to their personal profile.

Staff should make it clear to young people that accounts are professional profiles and if young people make contact with staff regarding anything outside their project work, then they should reply to explain that they are only able to discuss work related issues.

Facebook

For general Facebook use:

Any young people who approach you on your personal profile must be declined and a personal message can be sent outlining why you cannot add them. You can point them towards your work profile.

Staff are discouraged from 'friending' fellow colleagues, although this can be done at their discretion

Links between personal and private profiles should not be made, for example, Ark T Facebook accounts will not 'friend' personal accounts.

Staff must avoid any discussions about personal matters about themselves and the young people that they are interacting with.

Staff members will not 'trawl' through young peoples' news feed looking for information. Staff will 'unfollow' young people that they are friends with to avoid their information appearing in their newsfeed.

Staff will not tag young people in posts or photographs

The same language that you would use face to face with young people is appropriate online. For example, do not include 'x' on any of your messages and use no terms of endearment such as 'hun' and no abbreviation or text talk such as 'lol'. Emojis such as '😊' should be used with caution as they can be misinterpreted

Do not 'like' or comment on young peoples' posts or news feeds with the exception of post and comments that mention or contains a tag of group names or names projects or staff.

Do not ask young people about information that you have seen online

Staff should change their password at least every two months and send this password to a dedicated person on the management committee (This is only for professional pages not personal ones).

When sending private messages, include another staff member where appropriate. Staff can engage in private messages in a professional capacity only. Under no circumstances should staff delete message correspondence with young people.

Facebook account

Staff should not friend young people, they should inform young people of their account and this will enable the young people to make a decision as to whether they want to friend staff from club or group. When telling young people about their Facebook account, staff should be clear that this is a professional account and advise the young person to limit what they enable staff to see via their own privacy settings.

If a young person engages you in a personal conversation that is more than 'small talk' you must state the 'confidentiality statement' as you would in a face to face setting with young people

Contact with young people via Facebook should be treated with the same level of vigilance as your face to face work. Any concerns or issues that arise should be discussed with your management committee.

Settings should be set to ensure that 'timeline and tagging' activity is always reviewed by staff before posts appear on their timeline.

Facebook Page

Projects can set up a page to advertise their projects, but the activity on these pages must be checked regularly. Pages are set up for promoting projects and sharing information only. Young people can like the page and write comments on the wall once they have been reviewed by the page manager.

One person must be designated as the page manager and 2 others should have access to the page as administrators to ensure that at least three people have page admin access.

In settings, ensure that 'Posting Ability' is set so that staff review all posted before they appear on the page. Comments deemed inappropriate will be removed.

In settings, ensure that the 'Profanity Filter' is set to 'strong'

No young people will be tagged in posts on a page. The page manager will ensure that 'Tagging Ability' settings for the page will be set so that only page managers can tag in posts.

Photographs may be posted with the aim of promoting projects but you must have the permission for their photographs to be used in this way and your staff will not tag young people. If the young person is under the age of 18, parental consent is required. For those over the age of 18, staff can obtain oral consent. Always ensure that the photo subjects are aware that their image will be posted onto the club or groups Social Media outlets.

Facebook group

This may be set up by staff only for a specific group of young people that you are currently working with. The aim for this group is for members to update each other on progress towards a goal, information sharing and planning events.

Only work Facebook accounts can be attached to this group

Once you have finished working with that group of young people, you must remove yourself from this group

Staff can engage in private messages in a professional capacity only

If a young person engages you in a personal conversation that is more than 'small talk' you must state the 'confidentiality statement' as you would in a face to face setting with young people

Photographs of the group may be shared within the group with young people's permission

Twitter

Photographs may be posted with the aim of promoting projects but you must have the permission for their photographs to be used in this way. If the young person is under the

age of 18, parental consent is required. For those over the age of 18, staff can obtain oral consent. Always ensure that the photo subjects are aware that their image will be posted onto club or groups Social Media outlets.

The group or club will not tag (@) young people in posts via Twitter

Cyber Bullying

Please refer to the Oxfordshire County Council Cyber Bullying Toolkit

http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/antibullying/cyberbullying/Oxfordshire_Cyberbullying_Toolkit.pdf

For more information, Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest have thorough help pages that are full of information about security and privacy.

<https://support.twitter.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/help>

<https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles>

I agree to uphold the behaviour code for working with children and young people at all times, while working/volunteering for Ark T.

Signed

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Date/...../.....